

## Claim Amendments

Claims 1-23 (previously canceled without prejudice)

24. (previously amended) A method of providing online library services to a plurality of users by a service provider operating a server computer connected to the Internet, said server computer configured to hold digital items for each of the plurality of users, said each of the plurality of users having an account with the server computer, the method comprising the following steps performed by the server computer:

- allocating storage to store a first user's information as the user's online library;

- assigning an address for the first user's online library;

- receiving the first user's account information;

- receiving a digital item;

- storing the digital item in the first user's online library;

- if the digital item is copyright-protected, then

  - receiving license information for the digital item;

  - storing the license information along with the copyright-protected digital item in the first user's online library;

- examining the license information for the copyright-protected digital item to determine a number  $N$  (where  $N \geq 1$ ) of simultaneous users who could access the copyright-protected digital item; and

- allowing no more than  $N$  simultaneous users to access the copyright-protected digital item.

25. (presently amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the digital item is a news article, a web page, a bookmark, a document, an e-book, an image, a piece of music, a piece of

audio, a video clip, or a movie.

26. (previously amended) A method of providing online library services to a plurality of users by a service provider operating a server computer connected to the Internet, said server computer configured to hold digital items for each of the plurality of users, said each of the plurality of users having an account with the server computer, the method comprising the following steps performed by the server computer:

- receiving a digital item;

- storing the digital item in a first user's online library;

- if the digital item is copyright-protected, then

- receiving license information, said license information indicating that the license is for access of the digital item for a predetermined time ( $T_{\text{license}}$ );

- permitting access the digital item in accordance with the time constraint imposed by the license information; and

- disabling access to the digital item upon expiration of the predetermined time ( $T_{\text{license}}$ ).

27. (previously amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of allowing no more than N simultaneous users to access the copyright-protected digital item comprises the step of:

- receiving a request from n requesters to access a copyright-protected digital item having N (where  $N \geq 1$ ) licenses;

- allowing each of the n (where  $n \leq N$ ) requesters to access the digital item for a predetermined period of time ( $T_{\text{access}}$ ).

28. (previously amended) The method of claim 27, further comprising the steps of:

- establishing a waiting list for each of the remaining ( $n > N$ ) requesters; and

- when one of the N licenses becomes available, permitting one of the requesters on the

waiting list to access the digital item.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of: streaming content of the digital item to said one or more of N users.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of: suitably formatting the digital item for access by said one or more of N users.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the step of formatting includes:

initiating a handshaking protocol with a designated device to establish the type of formatting required to make the digital item accessible to said one or more of N users.

32. (previously amended) A computer system configured to permit sharing of digital content between a first party and a second party, said computer system comprising:

a data communications capable of establishing a connection with the Internet;

an account establishment module capable of establishing an account for the first party and storing the first party's account information in the database;

a database interface module capable of storing in said database one or more copyright-protected digital items; and

a security module capable of making the one or more copyright-protected digital items accessible to the second party in accord with one or more constraints imposed by respective license information associated with the one or more copyright-protected digital items.

33. (previously amended) The computer system of claim 32 wherein the one or more constraints imposed by the license information restricts the number N (where  $N \geq 1$ ) of times the copyright-protected digital item may be accessed simultaneously.

34. (previously amended) The computer system of claim 33, further comprising a locking

mechanism configured to prevent access to the copyright-protected digital item more than N times simultaneously.

35. (previously amended) The computer system of claim 32 wherein the one or more constraints imposed by license information associated with a copyright-protected digital item restricts the time during which a user may access the copyright-protected digital item.

36. (previously amended) The computer system of claim 32 wherein the copyright-protected digital item is made accessible via a browser-controlled window.

37. (previously amended) The computer system of claim 32 wherein the copyright-protected digital item is made accessible via the HTTP protocol.

38. (previously amended) The computer system of claim 32 wherein the copyright-protected digital item is made accessible via a streaming technique.

39. (previously amended) The computer system of claim 32 further comprising:  
a formatter, said formatter capable of formatting the copyright-protected digital item suitable to the requirements of a client device.

40. (previously amended) The computer system of claim 39, wherein the formatter is capable of selecting a suitable format from a database of formats to format the copyright-protected digital item.

41. (previously amended) The computer system of claim 39, wherein the wherein the formatter is capable of selecting a set of stored rules to format the copyright-protected digital item.

42. (previously amended) The computer system of claim 39, wherein the formatter formats the digital item to fit the screen of said client device.

43. (previously amended) A method of providing online library services to a first user by a service provider operating a server computer connected to the Internet, said server computer configured to hold digital items of a plurality of users, said plurality of users having accounts with the server computer, the method comprising the following steps performed by said server computer:

receiving an identification of a digital item to be included in the first user's online library;

including the identified digital item in the first user's online library;

if the identified digital item is copyright-protected, then

determining a number  $N$ , (where  $N \geq 1$ ) of times that the copyright-protected digital item may be simultaneously accessed; and

allowing the copyright-protected digital item to be simultaneously accessed no more than  $N$  times.

44. (previously amended) A method of sharing digital content by a plurality of users via an online library established on a server computer connected to the Internet and configured to hold digital items, said server computer having an account for a first user, the method comprising the following steps performed by said server computer:

receiving an identification of a digital item to be included in the first user's online library;

including the identified digital item in the first user's online library;

if the identified digital item is copyright-protected, then

determining a time period ( $T$ ) during which the copyright-protected digital item may be accessed; and

allowing the copyright-protected digital item to be accessed during that time period ( $T$ ); and

disabling access to the copyright-protected digital item upon expiration of that time period (T).